[18th March 1955

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM :—" Will the Hon. Minister please tell us whether the Government have included Ootacamund (Queen of the Hill stations) as a tourist centre, and whether they have made any representations to the Union Government to develop this hill station as a first-class tourist centre? "

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY :—" A separate question may be put, Sir."

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM :—" Will the Government consider the possibility of holding a session of our Legislature in Ootacamund just to keep this Queen of Hills as attractive as in the olden days? "

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY :—" I may tell the hon. Member that this supplementary question has nothing to do with the main question."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" Sir, are the Government aware that the water-supply system in many other municipatities also is not satisfactory, especially at Kodaikanal, which is another health centre? "

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY :—" It may be so, Sir. I know the hon. Member has a permanent residence there, and therefore he must be well acquainted with the needs of the place."

Purchase of radium needles for the Barnard Institute of Radiology.

* 244 Q.—DR. A. SREENIVASAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Health be pleased to state—

(a) whether purchase of radium needles for the Barnard Institute of Radiology was made in 1947;

(b) if so, the quantity so purchased and its value;

(c) whether any payment was made to the supplier and if so, on whose authority the payment was made;

(d) whether the consignor sent any certificate of purity for the needles supplied; and if so, when;

(e) whether it was brought to the notice of the authorities that the needles supplied were sub-standard and if so, who brought to light the deficiency in the quality of the needles;

(f) whether any enquiry was held as to the suitability of the radium so purchased;

(g) whether it is a fact that as a result of enquiries, the Government decided to recover any amount from the Director, Barnard Institute of Radiology and if so, the amount proposed to be recovered from him; and

(*h*) whether any amount has been recovered from him so far and if not, why not?

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY :—" (*a*) Yes, Sir.

" (*b*) 694. 70 mgms. of radium needles at a cost of rupees 67,314–14–7.

" (*c*) Payment was made to the supplier under the orders of Government.

" (*d*) Yes, in 1952.

" (*e*) Yes. The Director of the Barnard Institute of Radiology.

" (*f*) Yes, Sir.

" (*g*) No, Sir.

" (*h*) Does not arise."

DR. A. SREENIVASAN :—" May I know, Sir, whether the Government ordered the payment without knowing anything about the purity of the radium? The officer in-charge of the radium department should have advised payment. If so, did he examine the article he received from the consignor before he advised the Government to order payment? "

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY :—" The order for the radium was placed by the Superintendent of the Government General Hospital. There was no office of the Director of Barnard Institute of Radiology at that time. When the needles were received, the bundle of certificates received with the consignment was handed over by the Professor of Radiology to the Physicist of the Institute to examine and tally them with the indent placed and report on their correctness or otherwise. The Physicist reported that the certificates tallied with the order placed. He reported after a lapse of three months that the purity certificates were not received from the suppliers. The matter was immediately taken up with the company which said that the certificates were not supplied by oversight and that they would be supplied soon."

DR. A. SREENIVASAN :—" How can the Government order payment to an article when it is not accompanied by the purity certificate? "

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY :—" The payment was made by the Superintendent, Sir."

DR. A. SREENIVASAN :—" The Superintendent was a person to whom radium was practically unknown. The then Superintendent of the Barnard Institute of Radiology should have advised the Superintendent of the Government General Hospital that everything was all right and therefore payment could be made."

[18th March 1955

MR. CHAIRMAN :—" This is what the hon. Member Sri Mohamed Raza Khan referred to when he said that this question related to something that happened some eight years before. It is not proper to ask so many supplementary questions. I am allowing only this last supplementary question."

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY :—" Sir, with your permission I may inform the hon. Member that the Government issued a Press Note when the late Dr. T. S. S. Rajan was the Minister for Health. This is what was said in the Press Note :

'The Government have gone very carefully into the case relating to the supply of defective radium needles to the Barnard Institute of Radiology, Government General Hospital, Madras, by an American firm, as it has given rise to a number of insinuations in certain sections of the Press. They find that there was no question of any part of the transaction having been improper or having been sought to be hushed up by the officers concerned but that the supplies made were not according to the specifications and that every effort is being made to get the needles rectified. The American firm which supplied the needles has agreed to rectify the defective needles and after the first lot has been rectified and tested, the other needles will be sent for rectification.'

The matter has been taken up by the Indian Embassy at Washington and they will be asking the company to convert the defective radium needles into heavy radium tubes for the treatment of cancer of the cervix."

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN :—" I rise on a point of order, Sir. It is not as if I am against an answer being given to this question. This question refers to something happened in 1947. Besides similar questions were put in the last Assembly and Council. Further, this question was the subject matter of a big debate in the last Assembly. Therefore I should like to know from you, Sir, whether questions which have already been answered and questions on which there was a debate in the Assembly, can now be asked after a lapse of about ten years. If questions like that can be put, we also will have the chance of putting questions relating to events of 1943 or 1944. I just want your ruling in the matter."

MR. CHAIRMAN :—" This point was taken into consideration and this question was allowed. The Hon. Minister has also answered the question."

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN :—" Is it your ruling, Sir, that any question relating to an incident which happened some seven or eight years can be put if the Minister concerned would answer it? "

MR. CHAIRMAN :—" I am not giving a ruling. I am only just saying what happened to this particular question. Every question is examined properly and then either allowed or disallowed. This question was allowed."